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ABSTRACT

A study investigated and reported on the state of women's training in Ontario after the federal transfer of labor market training to the Ontario government. Data were collected from women's representatives to Ontario's local training boards; regional focus groups; and women at the 2000 conference of the Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women. Findings indicated federal changes to training and income support entitlements reduced women's access to services and community-based programs; many women needed training but were unable to find a suitable program; language instruction, foundation skills development, bridge programming, income support, child care, and access to counseling were unmet critical service needs; women's entry into nontraditional occupations steadily diminished; and women had difficulty finding information about program availability, entry criteria, and counseling services. Steps recommended as the basis for future collaboration at the local level among agencies serving women were the following: campaigns to promote best practices and equity-based programming; identification of areas for standardization and collaboration; inter-sectoral partnerships; co-location arrangements and sharing resources; employment equity practices; prior learning recognition and knowledge/skill profiles; models for home-based workers; local board environmental scans; and monitor labor market information. (Contains a 22-item bibliography.) (YLB)

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A Report on Women's Training And Employment Services in Ontario

June 2000

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We would also like to thank the many women who were part of this research. Our gratitude to the participants in the focus groups in Ottawa, Windsor and Toronto, and the women directors on local labour force development boards for their thoughts and insights. We hope you find yourselves reflected accurately in the report.

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Executive Summary

The proposed federal transfer of labour market training to the Ontario government created a climate of considerable challenge and some opportunity. On the one hand, the transfer created the possibility for an integrated and seamless system for the delivery of labour market services. On the other hand, the erosion of public entitlement-based income support and employment services has increased the potential for arbitrary and uneven standards of access, programme content and delivery in training, adjustment and related employment services. This report reviews the key policy changes in recent federal and provincial restructuring of labour market training for women's access to training and employment services in Ontario. The report identifies key issues for community-based trainers across the province, and integrates the results of focus groups held in Toronto, Windsor, and Ottawa. For this research ACTEW also consulted with women's directors on the 25 local labour force development boards.

Public equity policy and programmes have all but disappeared under the combined impact of federal and provincial restructuring and privatisation. Trainers are concerned about their continued ability to provide specialised services to those most at risk. Access to training has become more individualised and market-based, providing short-term interventions usually lasting one day or even less.

IMPACT OF PROGRAMME CHANGES ON AGENCIES AND PARTICIPANTS

Community based training programs have traditionally maintained high rates of participation and retention among women. They have provided the most accessible vehicles for labour market entry and re-entry. As the burden of tuition and related costs is shifted to individual participants, agencies are concerned about the likely impact on women and visible minorities. Women seeking to re-enter the paid workforce may have little recourse to programmes other than work-for-welfare. Agencies are concerned that their participants will also face unmanageable debt-loads at a time when they most need income support and related assistance to cover child-care, dependent care, transportation and other expenses.

MONITORING LABOUR MARKET TRENDS

Occupational research, particularly in health and education, indicates that restructuring is proceeding along gender-based lines. This has serious implications for programmes, employment services and adjustment strategies for women. Self-employment and part-time work — voluntary and involuntary — are among the fastest growing employment forms affecting mostly women. These patterns create specific training and adjustment needs and opportunities and form an under-researched area of considerable importance for assessing, planning and delivering labour market training and employment services to enhance the economic security of Ontario women.

LOOKING AHEAD: DEVELOPING AN ONTARIO PROVINCIAL STRATEGY FOR WOMEN'S TRAINING

Agencies have developed a wide range of training and employment services responding directly to the multiple barriers women face in a competitive labour market. Community agencies recognise the need for a continuum of services with access from multiple points. Local programmes need to work more closely together through regional networks, identifying areas for collaboration and standardisation guided by an articulation of "best practices" for the sector. Community programmes can also collaborate with local boards to establish servicing levels and multiple delivery options based

on community, regional and provincial needs and priorities.

In the focus group reports attached to this report, ACTEW asked women's training agencies to discuss the following questions:

- Over the past two years, what changes have you seen or experienced regarding access to training and employment programs and services?
- Are there groups or individuals that were able to access services but are not longer receiving those services? What groups or individuals?
- What changes were you anticipating related to a Labour Market Development Agreement in your area? What changes are needed?
- What can we do provincially to lobby/work/create awareness of the issues?

In this paper we report on the findings from the focus groups, our meeting and discussion with 22 of the 25 women directors from local boards and our discussions with women at the March 2000 Conference of CCLOW, the Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women. The report was also reviewed by rural women in the Grey-Bruce area for validity and applicability to their situation. The same notes sounded everywhere, programmes have been lost, service levels are decreasing, and access is diminished.

Summary of Recommendations/ Next steps

The following steps could be considered as the basis for future collaboration at the local level among agencies serving women:

CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE BEST PRACTICES
A series of Best Practices to be developed for each equity group.

CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE EQUITY-BASED PROGRAMMING
Training and employment services networks to collaborate in developing a campaign promoting equity-based programming and the training/employment services provided by the sector. This campaign would highlight the advantages of successful partnerships and the benefits of life-long learning to employers and program participants.

IDENTIFY AREAS FOR STANDARDISATION & COLLABORATION
Each sector should discuss the feasibility of standardised assessment, balancing the need for cost-efficiency against that of specialised and targeted service interventions.

INTER-SECTORAL PARTNERSHIPS
Providers should be supported to develop partnerships to identify and close current gaps in the system. Inter-sectoral partnerships should be pursued as one avenue for the development of employment bridging programs for all equity groups.

CO-LOCATION ARRANGEMENTS/ SHARING RESOURCES
Co-location and cost-sharing arrangements geared toward shared resources through integrated service delivery are an excellent way to improve client service. Community neighbourhood learning centres provide a possible model for this approach.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PRACTICES
Agencies delivering services through public contracts should develop and implement comprehensive employment equity plans covering all aspects of program development and service delivery.

PRIOR LEARNING RECOGNITION AND KNOWLEDGE/SKILL PROFILES
Community-based trainers can provide an important access point for women who need assistance developing PLAR portfolios and undergoing related assessment and recognition tools. Steps should also be taken now to implement legislative measures needed to ensure that professional accreditation review procedures are equitable for those who need recognition of off-shore credentials.

MODELS FOR HOME-BASED WORKERS
Servicing models must be developed to accommodate the unique needs of home-based service and production workers.

LOCAL BOARD ENVIRONMENTAL SCANS
The scope of local board environmental scans should be expanded to monitor for changes in access to services that are of particular importance to women.

LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION
Labour market information should be monitored for gender-based trends and changing employment patterns. LMI should also be monitored for patterns of precarious and contingent employment.

Background

In 1998, ACTEW received a grant from the Status of Women Canada. The purpose of this grant was to investigate and report on the state of women's training in Ontario. To assist us in preparing this report, we conducted a series of focus groups. We met with women's representatives to the twenty-five local training boards across Ontario, and held regional focus groups in Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor. In addition to the focus groups, we also consulted with women at the CCLOW conference held in March 2000. For ACTEW and our member programmes it is crucial that we have a complete picture so that we might prepare for changes in the future.

Responsibility for the provision of public services is being steadily devolved right down to local governments, which are already strained to capacity. At the same time, services are being privatised and individuals are expected to take on greater responsibility for the financing and provision of services on their own, without government assistance. On one side of this equation, governments are emphasising the need for individual self-sufficiency as both a condition for and an outcome of access to services. On the other side, public services are being increasingly delivered by the private sector.

FEDERAL POLICY CHANGES: BACKGROUND TO THE EI ACT

The Employment Insurance Act (July 1, 1996) initiated a radical overhaul of existing labour market programs and services. The EI Act revamped the unemployment insurance program, in part as a response to criticisms that the program needed to be changed from a passive to an active policy intervention strategy. The federal government wanted to show its commitment to 'active' measures. Under the rubric of harmonising and co-ordinating federal and provincial roles, the program of employment benefits funded directly out of the EI account now provides for the following back-to-work measures (Part II benefits):

- wage subsidies
- earnings supplements
- self-employment assistance
- job creation partnerships
- Employment and Development Benefits (formerly skills loans and grants)

The Consolidated Revenue Fund has been drastically reduced, eliminating an important source of funding for programs geared toward non-EI eligible clients. The Act further tightened access to unemployment insurance and therefore to training services as well. In fact, the percentage of all unemployed workers who are now eligible for and therefore able to collect unemployment insurance benefits (the beneficiaries: unemployed ratio) plummeted from a high of 83% in 1993 down to 36% by 1998. Benefits rates and duration have similarly declined.

Access to the majority of training and employment services (now called Part II Benefits) is contingent upon eligibility for Part I - EI - benefits. The 1996 Act eliminated direct purchase of training. Finally, the Act includes a provision prohibiting provinces and territories from using EI account funds for direct or block purchases. This has meant that institutions no longer receive block funding for people on EI. Funding is transferred directly to individuals and can be used only to pay tuition fees, accounting for only 25-40% of program costs.

Since 1993, total training expenditures have been reduced nationally by nearly 50%. In fact, federal general revenue spending on training in Ontario has been reduced from $764 million in 1995/96 to $79 million in 1997/98, a move that forced the closure or significant downsizing of many programs across the province. All remaining funding comes directly out of the EI Account, an account into which

employers and employees are the sole contributors. Federal expenditures on training have declined as a proportion of the overall budget to the current 1999 low of 28%, compared to 83% in 1995.[1]

CHANGES IN FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL FUNDING PRIORITIES

How have these developments affected women's access to training? The following table compares training expenditures before the new changes were introduced (1995/96) and expenditures after the first full year under the

Expenditures by Intervention ($000) 1995/96 - Ontario

LONG-TERM INTERVENTIONS	
Self Employment	51,067
Job Creation Partnerships	34,394
Fee payers	82,728
Training Purchases	277,836
Project Based Training	49,219
Total Long-Term Interventions	**495,244**
SHORT TERM INTERVENTIONS	
Employment Assistance	24,402
Total Short-Term Interventions	**24,402**
Other UIDU	**8,669**
Total - UIDU	**528,315**

EBSM - Part II Expenditures by Intervention ($000) 1997/98 - Ontario[2]

LONG-TERM INTERVENTIONS	% change over 1995/96		Women % of total	Visible Minorities % of total
Targeted Wage Subsidies	31,084		41.42	4.78
Self Employment	44,468		45.59	3.06
Job Creation Partnerships	23,256		39.19	3.28
Enhanced Fee payers	13,320		47.60	4.36
Training Purchases	158,131	(-43.08)	35.39	3.54
Project Based Training	38,539	(-21.70)	50.71	6.84
Total Long-Term Interventions	**308,798**	**(-37.65%)**	**40.82**	**4.15**
SHORT TERM INTERVENTIONS				
Employment Assistance Services	82,992		54.90	4.37
Individual counselling Interviews only			49.28	5.32
Total Short-Term Interventions	**82,992**		**53.94**	**4.54**
Other EBSM	59,162			
Total - EBSM Part II	**450,952**			
Grand Total - Part I & II	**575,475**		**46.66**	**4.32**

new program. As this comparison shows, the majority of expenditures were redirected out of project based training and training purchases, and flowed into short-term interventions, usually lasting one day or less.

According to federal government sources, one of the important results has been a considerable saving to the unemployment insurance fund, most notably in the returns from "unpaid benefits". Ontario leads the national target, with a total of just over $235 million calculated in unpaid benefits "saved". This amount was 128.95% of the targeted amount, or 28% more than what HRDC had budgeted for in savings, compared with 88.22% for the national average.[1]

CHANGES IN FEDERAL SPENDING PATTERNS

It is important to review federal spending patterns over the past decade. The following chart shows the trend toward an accelerated accumulation of surplus against a steady decline in expenditures. Current estimates project a surplus of $26 billion in the EI account as of 1999.

As the following table shows, federal funding transfers to Ontario from CRF and UIDU were decreasing significantly by the mid-1990s. Allocations under the new EI account could not even begin to make up the shortfall to programs designed for women who did not meet the new, more stringent EI eligibility criteria. Provincial spending was similarly reduced, with nearly $1 billion taken out of public and post-secondary educational budgets in a move that severely restricted the availability of adult education, upgrading and ESL programming across Ontario. These reductions need to be read in concert with the massive overhaul launched in the area of GWA/FBA income support programs and the redirection of programming initiated through the work-for-welfare Ontario Works initiative.

Federal HRDC UI/EI Part I Account (billions)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Benefit Payments	17.7	19.1	17.9	15.4	13.5	12.8	12	11.8	11.7
Administration	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.2
Interest	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1				
Total Costs	18.9	20.5	1.6	17.1	14.9	15	14.2	13.4	12.9
Premium Revenues	14.7	17.8	18.4	19.3	19.2	19.1	19.4	19.6	19.2
Interest						0.1	0.3	0.7	1
Surplus (deficit)									
Curr[illegible]	-14.2	-2.6	-1.2	2.3	4.3	4.9	6.3	7.1	7.3
Cu[illegible]ative	-2	-4.6	-5.8	-3.6	0.7	5.6	11.9	19	26.3

Federal & Provincial Training and Employment Program/Service Expenditures: 1995-1998 ($000)[1]

Year	Provincial			Federal				Total
	Employment	Training	Total	CRF	UIDU	EI EBSM	Total	
1995-96	823.4	957.6	1,781.0	176.6	533.6	N/A	710.2	2,491.1
1996-97	357.9	828.6	1,186.5	54.6	203.8	306.5	564.9	1,751.4
1997-98	332.9	859.8	1,192.7	17.1	8.8	550.2	576.1	1,768.8

Development & Delivery of Labour Market Programmes

The role of federal and provincial governments in the development and delivery of labour market programs has changed dramatically over the past decade. Canada's approach has always been two-tiered: a contributory system of unemployment insurance combined with access to job-related training, counselling and job search through the National Employment Service. When Ottawa announced that it intended to withdraw from the training arena, negotiations began with all the provinces to discuss the complex issues involved in realigning labour market training and employment services.

As part of this report, ACTEW agreed to research the status of Labour Market Development Agreements across Canada and consider their impact on women's training and employment services. These agreements, or training deals, transfer responsibility for delivering training and employment services from federal to provincial or territorial jurisdiction. As of December 1999, Labour Market Development Agreements had been negotiated and signed in all of the provinces and territories with the exception of Ontario. These agreements transfer the responsibility of delivering employment and training services for employment insurance eligible clients and detail how the services will be delivered.

The agreements take several different forms; full transfer of responsibilities, strategic partnership, and co-management. Full transfer agreements are in place in Alberta, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Quebec, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories. Newfoundland and Labrador, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island and the Yukon have negotiated co-management agreements in which the federal government and the province are jointly responsible for the delivery of services. Nova Scotia has signed a strategic partnership agreement. Ontario and the federal government put their negotiations on hold for three years, starting early in 2000.

The first agreements were signed in December 1996 and the last with Nunavit, in March 2000. The agreements include a three-year review clause and provide the framework for transferring the responsibility for delivering training and employment services funded from the Employment Insurance account.

Women's participation as a delivery service sector has not been formalised in any of the negotiations. In fact, Ontario was one of the few jurisdictions to form a reference group representing the service delivery sector. This group, the Training Delivery Advisory Group, TDAG, met several times throughout the life of the negotiations in Ontario. The TDAG was composed of representatives from the school boards, colleges, private vocational schools, help centres, literacy organisations and community-based trainers. The women's community-based training sector was represented through ONESTEP, the Ontario Network of Skills Training Employment Programs. The reference group was disbanded when the negotiations were officially put "on-hold".

The Labour Market Development Agreements have changed the delivery of training and employment services across Canada. In December 1998, the Canadian Labour Force Development Board issued their "First Annual Report on the State of Labour Market Programs and Services in Canada". This was the first in what was envisioned as a series of reports documenting the changes in labour market programs and policies since 1995.

The report describes the changes implemented in the Employment Insurance Act of 1996. This includes the revised criteria for eligi-

bility for EI, which has resulted in far fewer women actually receiving benefits. Another change is the way in which government purchases training. Up until July 1999, the federal government could purchase either training programs, through Project-based Training, or seats in programs, called direct purchase. As of July 1999 this has been replaced by providing funding directly to individuals through either grants or loans. This change has dramatically affected the community-based training delivery sector, where marginalized women were often served.

Some of the changes reported in various jurisdictions include:

- Difficulty in satisfying eligibility criteria for active labour market programs and services. Those groups who need programs and services the most, such as long-term unemployed, aboriginal persons, single parents, older workers at risk, persons with disabilities and people who are underemployed, are least likely to be eligible for programs.
- Overall reductions in budgets have further restricted access.

Under the terms of the LMDA, provinces are entirely free to set their own rules governing eligibility, training, local management and repayment procedures. Under a provincial system, access and eligibility vary considerably between and even within provinces. Guidelines for accreditation and for funding also vary. Finally, devolution challenges the capacity of national sector strategies to operate across provincial boundaries. At this point the federal government retains only those areas that are national in scope, identified as the following:

- Pan-Canadian initiatives funded through the EI account
- national labour market information system
- labour market exchange

What has Happened to Women's Access to Training in Ontario?

The proposed transfer of labour market training to the Ontario provincial government created a climate of considerable change and some opportunity. On the one hand, the transfer opened the possibility of an integrated and seamless system for the delivery of labour market training. On the other hand, the erosion of federal entitlement-based programs like EI has opened the potential for arbitrary and uneven standards of access to training, adjustment and related employment services.

The federal government began its withdrawal of services a few years ago, and completed the process in June 1999. This move led to a great deal of uncertainly and instability in the community-based training sector. These changes have had a major impact on access to training and employment services for women and set the stage for our discussion of the future of women's training in Ontario. At present, negotiations between the federal government and Ontario are on a three-year hold. What we can expect when Ontario finally assumes responsibility for labour market services?

More than any other single change, the funding and delivery of training and employment services have been completely overhauled. Direct funding now goes from government to individuals and individuals themselves are expected to contribute. Management has been decentralised to the regional level, driven by local planning and labour market priorities. Oversight of case management and contracts is the only remaining government role. Almost all service development and delivery has been shifted to third party delivery, opening the door to competition from the private sector which often does not serve women well.

Federal changes to training and income support entitlements have steadily reduced women's access to services across Canada.

- Income support for trainees dropped by 64% between 1994/95 and 1998 (from $1 billion to $357 million)
- Weeks of training dropped by about 50% between 1994/95 and 1998
- Non-EI support for training dropped from about $600 million in 1993/94 to $110 million in 1996/97
- The percentage of unemployed persons receiving UI/EI Income benefits (Part I) has dropped to less than 40% nationally[3]

Access to training for women who were not UI-eligible used to be financed from the general revenue account known as the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) and from the Unemployment Insurance Developmental Uses fund (UIDU). Under these federal transfer programs, the federal government directly financed training programs through a combination of methods: project-based funding, Direct Purchase of Training (DPOT) and block purchases of training seats.

Overall, these policy changes have disproportionately affected women. For example, the average person separated from employment in Toronto Centre in 1997 was a single/sole support 33-year-old woman who was ineligible for unemployment insurance benefits. In fact, claims filed by women dropped 20% compared to 16% for men. One of the features of the 1996 Act was the 35-hour qualifying requirement, a measure that was alleged to ease qualifying conditions for part-term workers. However, as we can see by looking at the 1997 returns, women's access to insurance benefits declined significantly under the 1996 EI Act:

- 31% of unemployed women received benefits compared to 39% of men (excluding

maternity leave coverage)

- only 25% of young women (under 25) who lost their jobs were eligible for benefit coverage

Based on data collected by HRDC for 14 communities in Canada, we can see the effects of these changes in Toronto, the only Ontario community included in the sample.[4]

- average age of persons separated from employment in 1997 was 33 years
- proportion of females separated from employment was 55%
- proportion of single/sole support persons was 65%
- EI recipients as proportion of persons separated from employment during 1997 was 23%

Key Issues for Women's Services

Many women need training but have been unable to find a suitable program. Language instruction, foundation skills development, bridge programming, income support, child-care and access to counselling are still critical service needs that are going unmet. Older women have been left with few if any supports. In fact, nearly all programming for adults has eroded in communities across Ontario.

Women from the regional focus groups in Windsor, Ottawa and Toronto told us how access to community-based programmes has been seriously affected as a direct consequence of recent policy changes. Not surprisingly, access has diminished most substantially for those groups already marginalized by economic and wage policy changes, including: women, people of colour, youth, and older workers. Entry into non-traditional occupations for women, once a priority of both federal and provincial employment programming, has steadily diminished. Women in low-income groups have continued to lose ground. For example, women in Ottawa who seek training opportunities are compelled to assume a sizeable debt-burden at a time when their income security is at its most precarious. Credentialism adds an additional barrier, requiring high-level training in computer literacy as a minimum requirement for entry-level jobs which are frequently low-waged positions within the contingent work force. Once there, it is increasingly difficult to move into secure and stable employment. This path of further marginalisation within the labour market is exacerbated by the requirement that women secure a guaranteed job offer as a criterion for access to training.[7]

Recent studies have alerted community agencies to the potential benefits and adverse consequences of devolution. A leading concern is the capacity to maintain an equity focus in the absence of supportive public policy. Another is our ability to provide specialised services and programs for those designated most 'at risk' and/or confronting multiple barriers to sustainable employment. Complete devolution brings with it the potential for greater flexibility and responsiveness to local needs, but only if lines of accountability are clearly defined among all negotiating partners. Unfortunately, women and other equity groups have received neither the assurance nor the evidence that any level of government is prepared to endorse an accountability framework that includes an equity agenda.

In Windsor, Ottawa and at the CCLOW conference, we heard that women who need job training also require a variety of other services which community programmes are no longer funded to provide. Training programme staff are increasingly time-stressed. Programmes are pressured to produce "results" which are do not often take account of participants' needs. Far too few programmes are able to provide comprehensive orientation or support programming. In the alternative, programmes are seeking cost-effective means of delivering these services, for example, turning to automated, self-guided delivery systems delivered through the Internet. This option works well for those already familiar with both the technology itself, and more importantly, with their own training eligibility and objectives. For others, this is not a realistic approach to training. A representative from the Women's Incentive Centre in Windsor coined the term "computer terror" to characterise a challenge shared by many women seeking to re-enter the job market. The race to technology is leaving many behind. Women need mentoring to aid them in learning about new technologies. In Windsor, we heard of one example of the TD Bank encouraging use of the ATM. Although several automated tellers were available, there were long lines for the human tellers since

customers were uncertain how to operate the ATMs. The bank responded by bringing in people to teach customers how to use the ATM, demonstrating an effective linking of human and automated service delivery options.

Access to comprehensive information is another challenge confronting women attempting to negotiate their way through this terrain. Information is fragmented, mirroring the training and employment system itself. Women reported considerable difficulty in finding information about programme availability, entry criteria and counselling services. We require clear and comprehensive, realistic information about occupations and careers using information technology. Those who speak a language other than English are doubly disadvantaged. Similarly, the availability of French-language services does not meet the demand. Recognition of offshore credentials and training constitutes a further barrier to employment and career development.

There is currently no provincial or federal requirement in any jurisdiction that includes a focus on designated groups or requires that public dollars be allocated according to equity-based spending targets. Ontario saw the repeal of the Employment Equity Act in 1995. Equity objectives have been a short-lived component of public policy-making. Its critics argued from the outset against the possibility of achieving both equity objectives and efficiency goals in the same policy roster. However, equity groups have just as convincingly argued that both sets of objectives can in fact be accomplished.[4] In the areas of job training designed to facilitate labour market access and sustainable employment security, programs have demonstrated their effectiveness given a favourable economic and political climate. The challenge is now to develop a strategy for promoting and practising equity at a time when governments, including the current Ontario regime, have publicly stated their opposition to any program designed to accomplish non-market-based objectives.

Federal retrenchment has meant that equality commitments are no longer included among identified policy priorities or objectives. With cancellation of the federal Designated Group Policy in 1997, there is no requirement that any transfer of federal funding authority to another level of government be accompanied by equity-based monitoring criteria. The federal government continues to provide assistance to Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and youth.

Provincial Delivery of Employment & Training Services: What's Ahead?

The province currently offers the following roster of programs and services:

- Apprenticeship programs
- Sector Initiatives Fund
- Adjustment advisory
- Job Connect
- Literacy & Basic Skills
- Training Hotline
- Local Training Boards

Although we must await the outcome of federal-provincial talks, it is likely that sometime in the future, under an LMDA Ontario will take over the full range of programs currently on the table. Transferred services will include the following:

- Assessments
- Screening
- Counselling
- Job search

All of the following employment services are currently open to third party delivery

- career assessment & planning
- job search assistance
- service referrals
- child care

As part of its discussions with the federal government, the Ontario government indicated that it wanted to change the way training policy is designed and administered. Two key design principles were driving the plan to restructure training programme objectives and administration. These were:

1) the government's "accountability framework" and

2) decentralisation & regional management.

The government's accountability framework is really a set of guidelines describing how services, programs and delivery standards are to be administered. The government's approach was explained in the report, *Ontario's Plan for an Integrated System of Employment Services, Targeted Programs and Delivery.*[1] These are the priorities:

- harmonising with existing initiatives to eliminate overlap and duplication
- reducing dependency on unemployment benefits
- allowing flexibility for local input and decision-making on program and service design and implementation
- recognising the responsibility that individuals have to identify and address their employment needs

Decentralisation & regional management may also be understood as the design and delivery of training policy and programming based on a market-driven model, and the drive to offload programme responsibilities and costs to municipalities. Program responsibilities have been reorganised in order to clearly separate responsibility for costs, policy development, programming and "client groups" among the three levels of government.

The following overview shows the division of responsibilities developed so far.

HRDC

Human Resources Development Canada will continue to oversee EI Benefits and Labour Market Information. In these areas, HRDC will effectively continue to determine access to programs and services by setting local targets and access criteria.

Provincial Government

During the transitional period, the Ontario government worked to develop a provincial infrastructure which will organise and co-ordinate the full range of training and employment services through a market-driven delivery structure. MTCU has worked with local boards to develop an inventory of training programs. This inventory will be used to set servicing levels for each of the local board catchement areas. It is likely that the government will designate some areas as over-serviced and others as under-serviced. Some communities have taken the initiative themselves and have started to develop their own inventories, featuring standardised descriptions of providers, course offerings, and related products and services.[10] The plan is the MTCU will take over internal delivery of employment services, service planning and contract management.

The Ministry of Community & Social Services (MCSS) continues to oversee the development of Ontario Works policy and programme targets, and municipal contract management. Ontario Works (workfare) is the lead training strategy for the Ontario government.

Municipal Governments

Municipalities oversee Ontario Works program implementation and administration including: intake, resource centre and job search, local service planning and contract management.

Skills Development & Employment Benefit

The Skills Development and Employment Benefit programme was implemented in September 1998 as the Transitional Skills Grant programme. Under the program, transitional grants/loans are allocated directly to individual clients. The loan:grant ratio has not yet been determined, although HRDC has repeatedly stated that it prefers that there be some loan proportion to encourage what it calls client self-sufficiency. The Ontario government indicated it would not include a loans component. The most recent figures available at the time this report was written were for February 1999. These figures suggest a strong trend toward private over public delivery, and a greater emphasis on 'client contribution.'

HRDC grant = $8,932 million (68.3%)
Client contribution: $4,090 million (31.7%)

clients were asked to contribute up to 70% of the course cost, a formidable barrier to women on social assistance or on the decreased EI benefit payments.

CLIENT CONTRIBUTION

Community groups are concerned about program accessibility under SDEB. Many of the people served by community agencies have limited access to programs that are voluntary, relevant, and of high quality. Women seeking to re-enter the paid workforce may have little recourse to any programs other than workfare. Finally, agencies are concerned that their participants will face unmanageable debt-loads at a time when they most need income support and related financial assistance to cover child-care, dependent care, transportation and other training or work-related expenses.

Allocation of Public Expenditures under Skills Development and Employment Benefit: Ontario (as of February 1999)[1]

EI active	77.40%	Private	78.30%
Reachback	14.70%	Public Institution	18%
SAR (OW)	4.90%	Non-profit	6%
Unidentified	4.70%	Unidentified	3%

Source: MTCU, Update on Federal Transitional Skills Grants and Skills Loans and Grants, (April 8, 1999).

There are many outstanding issues associated with SDEB, including how loan - grant contributions will be assessed for individual applicants, particularly those clients who are not EI-eligible. SDEB is intended to cover the tuition portion of costs only. Outstanding costs to individual clients, including child care, transportation and materials constitute a high proportion of training-related expenses. How will these costs be funded? In the focus groups, we heard of examples cases in which

ADDITIONAL COSTS RELATED TO TRAINING

Training providers have raised concerns about individualised voucher-based approaches, namely the lack of predictability and stability for longer-range planning and financing. Community-based trainers are interested in developing common principles governing funding coverage for other eligible costs, including those associated with course development and delivery, overhead and capital. What

other services (e.g. counselling) will be eligible for coverage? SDEB is intended to cover tuition costs only, amounting to anywhere between 25-40% of total program costs. Agencies are concerned about how they will be able to make up the balance of overhead and administrative costs.

COST ELIGIBILITY: BROKER MODEL

Under the brokerage model, all servicing and program contacts occur through a decentralised network of third party deliverers contracted by government under a cost-competitive broker model. Accountability and program success is measured by savings to the EI account and returns to employment. In fact, the closest any person might expect to get to government may be through a computer terminal in a self-service kiosk.

Focus groups members told us that most of the money is going to private trainers, away from public and not-for-profit community agencies. To date, government has not released public documentation outlining safeguards/guidelines concerning how these dollars are being allocated and to which client groups. The broker model that accompanies SDEB erodes the base of services available to all except those most capable of surviving in a highly competitive self-service economy. Services like direct counselling, high intensity interventions, and basic language training are all crucial measures requiring trained and experienced staff.

Eroding Access & Referral to Training & Employment Services

Community agencies recognise the need for a continuum of services with access available at multiple points along that continuum. Participants in our focus groups emphasised that employment training works best when linked to career-path and career developmental opportunities based on accurate labour market information. We heard from participants in all the focus groups that it is crucial to link training services to timely and accessible labour market information.

Community-based trainers have developed a wide range of training and employment services which respond directly to the multiple barriers women face in the competitive labour market. Questions of accessibility and referral methods will be decided in the near future. It is imperative that the community sector which best responds to women's labour market needs be at the table when these decisions are made.

COST ASSESSMENTS, NEEDS TESTING

All services are increasingly needs driven, replacing the former concept of eligibility and universal entitlement. "Family" assets are included in the needs determination assessment. This has serious implications for women and young people who may be seen/assumed to be dependent upon a male worker. Needs are subject to regional, even local determination, and need-based assessments can give rise to variable and capricious standards.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION & COUNSELLING

Service interventions are increasingly initiated by individuals themselves, at self-service computerised kiosks, an approach which has been strongly endorsed and pursued by both levels of government. However, what has been lost in this approach? In part, this approach conforms to the Ontario government priority of encouraging individual self-reliance and primary responsibility for identifying employment needs and locating services necessary to meet those needs. Those who do not share the same levels of literacy, including computer-based technological literacy, are disadvantaged by this approach. So are those who require additional services including crisis, personal and financial counselling. Kiosks are a useful means of access for some; however services need to be augmented and additional follow up made available for those who need it. In Ottawa, clients doing the research for their EI training are using the ITI or Interactive Training Inventory, a website of training providers that is often hard to use. The site is maintained in Toronto so there is no local counsellor to work with individuals.

INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES ARE BEARING THE COSTS

Individuals now face considerable risks and responsibilities to access training. The self-sufficiency model favoured by government assumes that a person can determine her/his own training and employment service needs. She/he must go through an assessment to decide eligibility for financial assistance. Then she/he is expected to shop around for the most appropriate, affordable and accessible program. Access to training, always an issue, is no longer an entitlement. Needs-based determination is conducted at the provincial, regional and local level and may vary a great deal even within the same municipality. We have many examples of people denied training after receiving an assessment.

Focus group members — and community-based trainers generally — have identified a series of concerns about the objectives and implementation of the Skills Development Employment Benefit programme. These

concerns include the following:

- ability to pay restricts access for those who need it most
- coverage of non-tuition costs for individuals
- coverage of additional program costs, including overhead, capital and administration
- disproportionate allocation of SDEB away from community and public facilities and to for-profit trainers

Building Community Partnerships That Work

PARTICIPATING IN LOCAL BOARDS

Most communities have established local labour force development boards with participation from labour, business, education, training, and equity groups. Local boards have no decision-making authority over programme spending, service delivery or policy development. Their role is strictly advisory. Currently there are 25 local boards operating in the province.

Local board activities can be expanded to include additional research initiatives designed to provide more accurate readings of the local labour market within the broader regional economy. Local boards are well positioned to launch a variety of information-gathering and partnership-generating initiatives, including the following:

- local joint labour/management training needs assessments
- local inventory of all trainers in board area designated by type, certification and area of specialisation
- integrated labour market & economic forecasting in conjunction with economic development division of municipal/regional government

Local boards draw on a variety of tools to develop a community profile. Still, local community groups have still not been completely successful in developing partnerships with local boards in order to participate in the decision-making process regarding service levels and service delivery. Questions remain regarding how agencies and programs will be encouraged to participate in local board initiatives, how constituency groups advise local board directors, how boards work with educators to develop effective local service delivery, and how stakeholder might be encouraged input in the local planning process.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANS

Local boards environmental scans have become essential tools for developing labour market and demographic profiles. These scans provide snapshots of the local community. They reveal patterns of economic growth, employment trends, and basic demographic information. The E-scan is: "

- an ongoing process of analysing and assessing local training and adjustment needs
- a means of capturing underlying shifts, trends and changes in the environment
- an identification of opportunities and challenges in the local environment
- an overview/assessment of previous years
- an identification of areas needing change

We can evaluate the effectiveness of the environmental scan in a variety of ways, especially if we enlarge its scope. What does the E-scan tell us about changes in access to services of particular importance to women, including the following: day care, housing, home and dependent care, and public transportation? For this report, we reviewed the 1998 round of E-scans conducted by local boards across Ontario. Based on this assessment, we need to monitor for areas of economic instability and vulnerability, particularly in sectors that are large employers of women. Finally, monitoring for downsizing can generate important information relating to potential sectoral adjustment strategies, as well as the more limited short-term information regarding firm-level activities.

LOCAL PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Local planning and economic development provide an opportunity to encourage participation in activity that directly affects the life of

every person in the community. Labour force activity is not always considered part of local economic development. However, labour market conditions are shaped by political and economic decisions. Community economic development is a good example of how a community group or organisation can come together to influence local economic affairs. Focus group members in Windsor emphasised the need for CED policy support to facilitate and strengthen these vital local development projects. Governments at all levels regularly develop strategies to attract businesses to an area. Tax rates, health and medical services, public education, energy and transportation policies - virtually every area of public policy touches on the issue of economic development. Training, adjustment and employment policies are just as vital to planning the economic future of our communities. Local planning within a regional and provincial framework encompasses the following areas:

- adjustment
- economic growth
- CED
- LMI development needs and resources

GETTING THE LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION (LMI) WE NEED

Focus groups members in all the regions we consulted stressed that LMI should be analysed for gender-based trends. We also heard in the focus groups that access to clear, consistent and accurate LMI continues to be a problem. At the same time, we need to be able to monitor for patterns of precarious and contingent employment. For example, occupational research studies in the clerical group of occupations, in health care and education have shown how restructuring in each of these areas is proceeding on gender-based lines. Some industries are reorganising and redistributing work into home-based production of goods and services. Employment patterns like these have important implications for training and employment services that assist women who may be moving into or out of such industries. Home-based work is growing and is an area in which women are increasingly found in large numbers. These trends have direct implications for programs, employment services and adjustment strategies targeting women either moving in to or out of these occupational groups. LMI is most useful when it is designed in such a way as to investigate these trends.

EI rates (level/duration) and OW caseloads are important indicators that tell us how well the regional economy is serving human needs. But this is only part of the story. Although governments have opted to break the economic units down to the local level, local economies are closely linked to larger economic units, right up to the national and even global levels. The labour market is national as well as regional and local in scope. Even if programs are to be administered locally, we still need to analyse and administer labour market training and adjustment strategies at all of these levels. LMI can reveal patterns of under-employment and non-standard employment and indicate the barriers/obstacles to labour force participation for groups of women.

From women in Toronto, Windsor, Ottawa, and from across the country, we heard that self-employment and part-time work — both voluntary and involuntary — are the fastest growing employment forms for women. These patterns create specific training and adjustment needs and opportunities. In Ottawa, our focus group reported that there are little or no training options for women who choose either self-employment or part-time work. No courses are offered as part-time options. Part-time, contingent work and self-employment are all under-researched areas of considerable significance in assessing and analysing local, regional and provincial employment patterns.

Looking Ahead

Community-based trainers have a strong record of success in providing targeted services designed to assist women in overcoming multiple barriers to employment. Community-based training programs are rooted in the twin principles of accessibility and democracy. Community based training programs have traditionally maintained high rates of participation and retention among women. They have provided the most accessible vehicles for labour market entry and re-entry. At this point, it is crucial that programs work co-operatively to develop a co-ordinated response. Agencies need to develop a model of community and regional networking. Provincial linkages will be an essential component of this model.

Women in all the focus groups told us that currently there are no consistent, comprehensive standards regarding eligibility for and access to employment support services, where standards of eligibility and access translate into accountability to clients and to the surrounding community. Certainly, the effectiveness of programs can be assessed more pragmatically if they are all working toward a shared set of objectives. Outcome indicators must measure more than efficiency. The following components are central to the development of comprehensive infrastructure:

- role and decision-making capacity of third parties
- service delivery standards
- location of service points
- content standards
- evaluation standards
- scope of accountability framework
- client compliance standards

Community-based agencies need to understand how services and programs will be organised at the local level. We need to participate in local planning exercises. We need tools for deciding appropriate service levels and techniques to respond to women's training needs locally, regionally and provincially, including local service delivery networks and a local service delivery model. At the community level, we can anticipate streamlining and integration of services. However, agencies are well-positioned to bring forward their own planning priorities. ACTEW and ONESTEP are currently developing a database of programmes and services.

These programs are designed specifically to move individuals, the majority of them women, off income support and into the labour market. Training and employment services in Ontario are closely tied to the government's work-for-welfare program. This has tremendous implications for women who make up the majority of participants in community-based programs. Too often, however, participants are deprived of the vital supports like childcare, language training, and longer-term occupational training. Program links between income support/benefits and labour market services are being severed as individuals are expected to bear the burden of tuition and related costs themselves.

As the burden of tuition and related costs is shifted over to individual participants, agencies are concerned about the likely impact on women, people with disabilities, and visible minorities. Training agencies were once able to modify recruiting and retention strategies to accommodate these groups. At this point, program designs and supports are not adequate to facilitate equity training objectives in the absence of enabling public policy.

In the past decade, as this report makes clear, women's access to necessary labour market training and employment-related services has been seriously eroded across Ontario, in rural, remote and urban areas. Economic change and revised public policy standards have combined to entrench a substantially

diminished level of servicing. Community-based programmes are struggling to maintain reasonable staffing and programming. Individualised access, reduced points of access, and the restructuring of programmes continue to compromise the level of servicing and supports to women.

In the absence of supportive policy and funding, women, along with other equity-seeking groups, will continue to be overlooked in public policy, to be denied equitable access to the labour market and to secure employment at reasonable wages and in safe working conditions. For women in Ontario, access to free, or low-cost, supportive, holistic training and employment services is rapidly diminishing.

Recommendations/Next Steps

The recommendations included in this report are incremental steps toward developing a broader organising strategy for this sector. The following steps could be considered as the basis for future collaboration at the local level among agencies serving women.

CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE BEST PRACTICES

A series of Best Practices to be developed for each equity group, drawing on previous efforts by labour market reference groups and CLFDB initiatives, to promote consistent and comprehensive standards for training programmes, including public, community-based and private sector.

CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE EQUITY-BASED PROGRAMMING

Training and employment services networks to collaborate in developing a campaign promoting equity-based programming and the training/employment services provided by the sector. This campaign would highlight the advantages of successful partnerships and the benefits of life-long learning to employers and program participants.

Service providers could consider incorporating 'best practices' principles into short, medium and long-range business plans. Business plans could include a strategic marketing plan to promote the work of the sector.

IDENTIFY AREAS FOR STANDARDISATION & COLLABORATION

Assessment tools

Each sector should discuss the feasibility of standardised assessment, balancing the need for cost-efficiency against that of specialised and targeted service interventions. Efforts to identify areas of service duplication, overlap and possibilities for collaboration and standardisation should be guided by the articulation of 'best practices' for the sector.

INTER-SECTORAL PARTNERSHIPS

Providers should be supported to develop partnerships to identify and close current gaps in the system. Inter-sectoral partnerships should be pursued as one avenue for the development of employment bridging programs for all equity groups. Examples of existing sectoral partnerships include the Canadian Steel Trades and Employment Congress and the Canadian Grocery Products Sector Council, the Women's Skills Network

CO-LOCATION ARRANGEMENTS/ SHARING RESOURCES

Co-location and cost-sharing arrangements geared toward shared resources through integrated service delivery are an excellent way to improve client service. Community neighbourhood learning centres provide a possible model for this approach. There is an excellent model in Woodstock, which houses HRDC, OW, Job Connect and other programs. The service is completely integrated from the client perspective.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY PRACTICES

Agencies delivering services through public contracts should develop and implement comprehensive employment equity plans covering all aspects of program development and service delivery.

PRIOR LEARNING RECOGNITION AND KNOWLEDGE/SKILL PROFILES

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition provides an important opportunity for women to gain recognition for knowledge and skills acquired through informal methods in paid and unpaid work. PLAR began on the basis of the following principles:

- Recognising learning and accumulated skills in people's lives, in work, in our community and society
- Validating learning that has taken place through people's experience in work and society

Community-based trainers can provide an important access point for women who need assistance developing PLAR portfolios and undergoing related assessment and recognition tools. Steps should also be taken now to implement legislative measures needed to ensure that professional accreditation review procedures are equitable for those who need recognition of off-shore credentials.

MODELS FOR HOME-BASED WORKERS

Servicing models must be developed to accommodate the unique needs of home-based service and production workers.

Notes from Focus Groups

TORONTO FOCUS GROUP

Participants were ACTEW member programs and agencies from the City of Toronto.

CHALLENGES

- Valuable and successful programs lost HRDC funding due to discontinuation of block purchases. Some members have been struggling to find comparable replacement programs to offer their clients.
- As HRDC will not provide core funding, program needs in local areas where there is a gap in service are sometimes hard to fill.
- Agencies such as Skills for Change, where 100% of their clients are refugees and immigrants, are concerned with the fact that HRIF funding is primarily intended for EI eligible and Reach back clients.
- Accountability of private schools in regards to client support services that go beyond training.
- Agencies who are providing services to high needs — multi-barrier clients are not able to streamline costs and still provide the same holistic services.
- There are gaps in HRDC's directives for high needs clients, specifically in the areas of shared intervention networks and funding for transportation and childcare. JVS added that 48% of their clients are non-SAR and face extreme barriers.
- Member agencies have seen an obvious impact in the ability for women and newcomers to re-enter the workforce due to the lack of entry-level positions. This has been especially evident in the fields of clerical work and health care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Due to the lack of entry-level jobs in the labor market, the members of ACTEW recommend the return to wage-based programs with income and funding for transportation and access to childcare.
- The members of ACTEW recommend that HRDC track the impact of EI restructuring for clients who are non-SAR, non-IE, over 40, and/or disabled.
- The reorganization and restructuring of the job market has created new barriers for women, especially in the fields of clerical work and health care. This is a structural labour market issue rather than a "problem" related to lack of skills. We need an effective process for recognizing skills gained on-the-job to move women into new opportunities in information technology.
- In the current expansion of the Information Technology (IT) job market there is an opportunity to achieve success in the employability of clients by supporting IT career training. The members of ACTEW recommend that HRDC amend the SDEB guidelines to include the support of careers in IT.
- Due to difficulties clients are experiencing in finding entry level jobs, the members of ACTEW recommend that HRDC include a job placement component in their current rationalization plan. Supportive partnerships between employers and training delivery agency can facilitate implementing job-placement components. We recommend that HRDC facilitate these relationships.
- The members of ACTEW recommend that a follow-up component be a mandatory part of training programs and included in client's return-to-work action plans.
- The members of ACTEW recommend that HRDC aid in the development of funding partnership models for community-based

training agencies and then facilitate such partnerships (?).

- HRDC should recognize in funding guidelines and program models that high need clients need access to more extensive and comprehensive services and programs.

WINDSOR FOCUS GROUP

The participants represented community-based services, the local college, financial institutions, immigrant/settlement service providers, the university and the municipal social services branch.

1. Identifying the Issues

A. The local training board has identified four groups with gaps in labour market programming. They found that:
   - Youth — 25% of youth in Windsor are not finishing high school
   - Young women choosing careers in "non-trad" occupations; the ratio is 12-1 men to women
   - There are very few or no programs for middle-aged displaced workers, very few transition programs
   - Access to the labour market is a problem for foreign-trained professionals; problems re: literacy, numeracy

B. There are also issues related to women balancing work and family and training to access training.
   - Low-income women have no possibility to "train-up", no access to continuous improvement unless they go into debt (OSAP)
   - Most of the clients Windsor programs are working with are women facing poverty, violence, new immigrants, or women on social assistance. Some programs are working with EI eligible clients. Many clients have little or no work experience. Program staff see many women with "computer terror".
   - The training available qualifies people for minimum wage or entry-level jobs
   - Training is sometimes for jobs that won't exist
   - Only middle-class women can afford to retain

C. The bar (entry-level job expectations) has been raised very high, computer literacy and the knowledge of the Internet are now part of all job qualifications

D. The first rung of the training ladder is to convince people to return to high school or get their GED.

E. Clients have a multiplicity of needs that programs are not able to address.
   - Services are limited by time and money
   - There are layers of needs that correspond to a continuum of services that no longer is available
   - Programs may be working counter to the needs of the client

F. Teachers are focussing on content not students
   - No time for preparation or to address student support
   - No time for orientation or support systems

G. Providers are limited by: eligibility criteria, training time, funding requirements

H. Funders are buying results not programs

I. Students are not meeting college entrance requirements.

J. The loss of community-based training access points has created a reduction of multiple entry points, impact most dramatic on marginalized groups

K. Reduction of programming has led to increased confusion on part of both programs and clients

L. Organizations are moving service provision onto the web, but many clients need other services

M. Loss of counselling created huge gaps, people want personal attention when developing career plan

N. Race to technology leaving people behind; emphasis on mechanical competence

O. No ability to recognize variety of learning styles

P. Hard to find information on what's available

Q. Programs are moving people into entry-level minimum wage jobs, but not way to move people out of those jobs and into other levels of firm

R. Program outcomes are often unrealistic

S. Creates vicious cycle

T. No systematic way to recognize prior learning

2. **Systemic problems still rampant and include:**
   - push to part-time/contingent work
   - no benefits
   - decreasing unionisation
   - no accountability
   - move to self-employment
   - lack of affordable accessible day care
   - expansion of working poor

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Need a multiplicity of services to address a diversity of needs
2. Need new ways of looking at the diversity, breaking down barriers, cross-cultural, cross-generational programs
3. Need more efficient ways to use human resources (mentoring)
4. Need more flexibility re: program criteria
5. Need different ways to determine outcomes and realistic outcomes
6. Need ways to address and manage a range of needs related to employment, both extrinsic and intrinsic needs
7. Need to be able to match programs to client needs
8. Need programs to address transition to new economy, bridging programs, "first steps at the beginning of the continuum"
9. Need to meet women at their level
10. Women need mentoring to interact with technology
11. Need clear information re: Information technology, careers, where are women, what is the workplace, accessing services
12. Need programs that support life-long learning
13. Need systems to document what women/ people know and how they learned it
14. Need more opportunities for networking, locally, provincially, nationally and not only via the Internet
15. Need "women into small business programs" that work, with follow-up, support, access to credit and loans
16. Need funding that doesn't pit programs against each other
17. Need federal and provincial grants to recognize work on community basis; danger in funding going primarily to private sector; Community-based training is the foundation, the equalizer
18. Need more opportunities for personal interaction, example of bank
19. Need better ways to connect people to services

OTTAWA FOCUS GROUP

The session was a brainstorming one, and collected impressions and beliefs from those present. Attendees were users, frontline workers and other residents of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC).

OWTEN members often find it difficult to know who is accountable for program inadequacies, and where to direct political action. Even when we do know, we have found it almost impossible to get quantitative data to test our perceptions. We have been trying for several years. Ideally, all three levels of government will work toward a consistent client access to appropriate counselling, training and employment programs, and will also provide accessible, consistent data to determine whether men and women are treated equitably.

BARRIERS

The group noted that not that all these barriers exist as described, but that all are genuinely perceived to exist. This is still a critical problem to solve, of course. We, along with our governments, need to close the gaps between what is supposed to happen, what actually happens, and what is perceived to happen.

- Tuition costs are up to 70% for some women
- There is one agency in Ottawa-Carleton that handles the majority of referrals from HRDC
- 50% is usual expectation toward the cost of training
- Lack of clarity across the whole process
- OWTN can't get information re: numbers of women getting training, women getting jobs after training
- Difficulty getting placements
- Clients may be directed to do training research on the Interactive Training Inventory
- Employment Resource Centres (ERC's) do not accommodate children, although two have special hours with child-minding
- Women on EI may have to have job guarantee at the end of training in order to be approved for course
- Women on social assistance have a "line of inquiry" to determine that training is an appropriate choice
- Sometimes women can't train with no job offer
- There is no on-going or long-term support for graduates of self-employment programs; no money for start-up, no money for marketing businesses; lack of on-going support is "setting people up for failure"
- Under Ontario Works there is no flexibility/allowance for gender-specific programs
- CBT programs aren't getting referrals from Tecsult
- There is some support for women's co-ops
- There is no place to go for coordinated information, system is fragmented
- There is no standard set of practices
- There are still multiple barriers for new immigrants to the labour force
- People can't get French language training although Ottawa-Carleton will probably be an official bi-lingual municipality

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. One-stop shopping
2. Consistency re: access for EI clients, OW clients, entry/re-entry and apprenticeship
3. Consistent standards re: funding and program criteria; clear, consistent and transparent
4. Accountability in the system especially re: service providers to the public
5. Funding for program outreach
6. Return to Bridging Programs; need bridging programs that include self-esteem building, confidence building, transferable skills, workplace preparation, orientation, employability skills, disability issues, literacy

7. Individually funded-approach is not working for all clients
8. Need a variety/diversity of approaches to address multiplicity of needs
9. Need more respect in the system for individual's choices; the system is patronizing
10. Need standard qualification for counsellors
11. Women who want only part-time work are not able to get free or low-cost training
12. Need a system to graduate people into employment without losing benefits
13. Need flexible formulas to allow women to access training, benefits and/or part-time work without being penalized
14. Need opportunities for new Canadians or new immigrants to contribute
15. Women need access to transportation support to get to training programs
16. Need a systematic way to evaluate and accredit off-shore credentials and experience
17. Need women-specific programs that take women's needs and learning styles into account

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Endnotes

1 Canadian Labour Congress, Unemployment Insurance Bulletin (Vol. 2 No. 1, August 1999): p. 6. Figures calculated from HRDC Statistics Bulletin.

2 Canada Employment Insurance Commission, 1998 Employment Insurance Monitoring and Assessment Report (December 18, 1998). Annexes at pp. 3.7, 3.8, 3.12, 3.15. All data reported from Corporate Management System.

3 As above, p.3.16.

4 Source: CLFDB Inventory of Federal and Provincial Labour Market Programs and Services and Human Resources Development Canada.

5 Canadian Labour Congress, Unemployment Insurance Bulletin (Vol. 2 No. 1, August 1999)

6 Canada Employment Insurance Commission, 1998 Employment Insurance Monitoring and Assessment Report (December 18, 1998). Annexes at pp. 4.1-4.2. Data from Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey, 1996 Census and "Tracking the Future". EI Recipients as proportion of employment separations calculated in the report by dividing number of EI beneficiaries (from T1 income files) in 1997 by number of people with separation from employment in that year.

7 ACTEW Focus Group, Ottawa, March 28, 2000.

8 Canada, "Transitions: getting there from here," Canada: Security, Opportunities and Fairness: Canadians renewing their social programs. Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, (Ottawa: 1995) p. 76.

9 MUCT, Ontario's Plan for an Integrated System of Employment Services, Targeted Programs and Delivery under a Labour Market Development Agreement, October 21, 1998: 2.

10 This recommendation was also included in Our Future is on the line: Report of the Education/Training Provider Network Project, January 1997: 8. For a copy of the report, see the Internet site: www.3waystreet.com/etpn/

11 Adapted from Lanark Renfrew and Algonquin Training Board, "Environmental Scan Template" (September 4, 1999)